

CHECKLISTS TO PREVENT INSECTS IN YOUR HOME

Infestations of insects do NOT develop overnight. If an infestation does occur, the help of a pest management professional may be needed to properly identify the pest and precisely treat the infested area for the best control. However, insects are less likely to establish in a structure if what they need (water, food, and shelter) is not available. With easy steps, you can make your home less favorable to the unwanted guests.

Reduce their water supply:

- ☒ Remove water dishes for pets at night.
- ☒ Fix leaky sinks and pipes.
- ☒ Check showers and baths for leaky plumbing.
- ☒ Screen the opening of faucets.
- ☒ Put wet cleaning sponges in a plastic baggy overnight.
- ☒ Do not leave standing water in the base of potted plants.
- ☒ Check the drip pan under the refrigerator for standing water.
- ☒ Check gutters and down spouts. Make sure water runs away from your home and does not splash near the foundation.
- ☒ Keep gutters free of leaves to prevent rain water from spilling over the side and next to the foundation.
- ☒ Never let water from a sprinkler wet the soil near a building or deck.
- ☒ When paving around your home, make sure that the paving is angled away from the structure to drain the water. Paving should be lower than the interior floor level.

Reduce their food supply:

- ☒ Remove pet food dishes at night.
- ☒ Store pet foods and bird seed in tightly sealed containers.
- ☒ Do not leave dirty dishes on the counters or in the sink.
- ☒ Run the garbage disposal daily to eliminate food in the drain.



Inspect your home for ways to prevent pest infestations (Photo by E. Benson)

- ☒ If you do not run it each day, rinse dishes well before putting them into the dishwasher.
- ☒ Use a trash can with a lid and clean it regularly.
- ☒ Clean surfaces in your kitchen to eliminate grease on oven hoods and walls near stoves.
- ☒ Vacuum the carpets regularly.
- ☒ Clean up spills on the floor immediately, and sweep and mop regularly.
- ☒ Wipe out insides of cabinets regularly.
- ☒ Rinse out recyclable items before storing them in a bin.

Reduce their access to shelter:

- ☒ Install fine mesh screen covers on all uncovered drains.
- ☒ Clean, dry and seal cracks and crevices in the foundation with a silicone caulk.
- ☒ Clean, dry and seal cracks and crevices within your home, such as in kitchen cabinets, with a silicone caulk.
- ☒ Do not place lights directly above the entry doors to your house. The further lights are from the door, the less likely insects are to fly in when the doors are open at night.
- ☒ Trim branches and shrubbery so they are not touching the structure and providing a direct route into your home.

Reduce their shelter:

- ☑ Do not store brown paper bags beside the refrigerator.
- ☑ Do not place mulch directly against your foundation. Always create air space between the vegetation and the wall.
- ☑ Do not store any timber or wood products (cardboard boxes, newspapers, cotton materials) beneath a suspended floor (such as in a crawl space).
- ☑ Move the woodpile away from the house in warmer months. This reduces the chance of insects hiding in the wood from coming into the house.

These lists offer only a few suggestions of ways to discourage pest problems in your home. Now that you have the idea, you probably can think of many more. One good way to identify problem areas, is to learn more about the different pests. Once you understand which conditions are best for a given pest, you can reduce or eliminate the resource that

attracts them. For information on many potential pests look on the Internet at <http://entweb.clemson.edu> for other Fact Sheets in the *Clemson Entomology Insect Information Series*. You also can call the Clemson Home & Garden Center information line at 1-888-656-9988 for a recorded message on many pest problems.

For other publications in our Entomology Insect Information Series visit our web site at <http://www.clemson.edu/esps>.

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